

**Hey Everybody,**

**Here is an update about a few upcoming offerings and some reflections about my recent retreat.**

I'm very excited about these two up-coming Series I'm offering, [Yoga and Dharma](#) starting next Friday at 7th Heaven and [Grace and Grit](#) starting in May at Yoga Kula SF.

I've really wanted to create an opportunity for folks who might be unable, financially or otherwise, to commit to a full-on immersion to be able to deepen their practices in a similar way. These are mini-immersions and are sure to deepen your practice on every level. If this appeals to you, I invite you to attend either one of these or both, especially because I will be gone so much this year and it will be a great opportunity to intensify and up your studies with me.

If you have any questions about them, contact me and I'll be happy to answer them. Also, please make sure to sign up in advance - in order make a commitment to the entire series. I made it financially viable to do so and if you are missing a weekend, I will give you the opportunity to make it up.

**Relaxing Get-Away to Esalen this month!**

If you are in need of some inspiration and re-rejuvenation, consider joining John Robbins and me for a weekend of creative writing and yoga.

This will be intimate and a lot of fun and you will come away with an open heart and new inspiration!

**Yoga & Dharma Series**

**Apr 15-Aug 12**

[7thheavenyoga.com](http://7thheavenyoga.com)

**Berkeley, CA**

**Apr 22 - 24**

**Creative Writing and Anusara Yoga Workshop w/ John Robbins**

[esalen.org](http://esalen.org)

**Big Sur, CA**

**May 14-Aug 27**

**Grace & Grit Series**

[yogakula.com](http://yogakula.com)

**San Francisco, CA**

**Insights from my meditation retreat.**

Dear Sangha,

I am back from a month-long silent retreat at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, under the guidance of my teacher Jack Kornfield. Just before I left, I spoke to my older brother, Bernie, in Switzerland. When I told him what I intended to do, he said that he couldn't be paid to do something like that, not even for a \$100,000.

Well, I have had a month to contemplate just why anyone, indeed, would spend their time this way.

A silent retreat is intense - no question about it. It consists of a very rigorous and strict schedule that begins at five o'clock a.m. and ends at nine-thirty p.m. An alternating regimen of sitting in meditation and mindful walking is interrupted only by meals; and nightly Dharma talks, which are instructional teachings on the practice of Theravada Buddhism. Aside from one's own thoughts, these evening sessions provide the only "entertainment" available. As, by participating in the retreat, one makes the commitment not to read, write, talk on the phone, or, yes, this too: not to check e-mails!

Every couple of days the participant meets with his or her teacher to ask questions, to make a progress report, and to receive tips on how to deal with stuff as it surfaces. This is the only talking that one does for the entire month.

It is a pressure cooker, no doubt, with no distractions or escape from oneself and one's habits. Jack tells the joke of a car on a desert highway, depicted in a cartoon he once saw. The illustration included a traffic sign with the following warning: "Your own tedious thoughts next 200 Miles!"

So why would I elect to undergo such an ordeal?

When I work on my computer, it occasionally gets stuck and freezes. Anyone working with computers is intimately familiar with this annoying glitch in modern technology. As my husband, Joshua, patiently explains to me, there is no need to panic. It is simply time to shut the computer down and then restart it. It almost always - miraculously - works!

The retreat serves in just the same way. It is like pushing the reset button, allowing us a pause during which time we take a look at our lives and see where we have gotten stuck or hung up.

To put it succinctly: It allows us to be fully present with both the blessings and the sorrows of our lives in a unique way. By making space within and around us in order to manage these aspects of ourselves, minus the powerful distractions of our daily lives, we can confront the issues we have been putting off, and revel in the marvel of trying to simply be.

There are so many blessings both in and around us. So much to celebrate and appreciate; especially what we normally take for granted or fail to notice when we are lost in thoughts or simply not paying attention. In retreat, we learn to receive the gift of every day blessings, fully, without hurry or worry of how long they might last.

And, instead of meeting our suffering with resistance and judgment, we learn to accept our difficulties with friendliness and compassion. The great Sufi poet, Rumi, said it well. In his poem, "The Guesthouse," he proclaimed the following:

**This being human is a guest house  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.  
Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.  
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.  
Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.**

Of course, it takes awhile to train the mind to stay in the moment and to greet each guest at the door, welcome or otherwise, with equanimity and grace. Anyone who has ever sat down and attempted to meditate knows the overwhelming urge - while seated and still - to continue planning, worrying, reminiscing and fantasizing; making us aware of how little we are present in the here and now.

Nevertheless, it is even more amazing that, relatively, it doesn't take that long to quiet the mind and open the heart. Even more good news: everyone can do it!

After having spent these past four weeks doing just so, I know it is possible and I know that it works.

In the afterglow, I am left with an almost unbearable sweetness of being, a simple gratitude of aliveness, different than I have ever known. I feel like a newborn, and can be moved to tears by just about everything.

The life I have is a precious gift and I am excited to re-enter it with all the insights and new tools gained during retreat.

Turns out that, if I had it, I would gladly pay a \$100,000 to attend a retreat like that again!

Katchie

—

**Katchie Ananda**

**Anusara Yoga**

[www.yogasangha.com](http://www.yogasangha.com)

[Forward email](#)

 SafeUnsubscribe

 Trusted email from  
Constant Contact  
Try for yourself!